

study at home was the learning of the Universities neglected. He pursued his heroic attacks on the Greek and Latin classics, and presently, like Vivian Grey he made the discovery 'that there were classics in other languages besides Greek and Latin,' and in his father's library 'was introduced to that band of noble spirits, the great poets and legislators and philosophers of modern Europe.' In the eager pursuit of knowledge he had his father's example to draw him on and his father's experience, no doubt, to guide him ; and it was at this time that he acquired the wide, though possibly superficial, acquaintance with books which we find even in his earliest writings, and that he laid the foundations of that really remarkable and highly unconventional knowledge of history, English and other, which he shows in all his works, and upon which he justly prided himself throughout his career. From his multifarious reading even law books were not wholly excluded, or so at least some scraps in the litter of early remains appear to indicate ; though more often we find the law profaned by the use of fragments of legal documents for literary notes and verses.

In his enthusiasm for knowledge Vivian Grey narrowly escaped 'being all his life a dreaming scholar,' and a similar danger may have seemed at this time to threaten the young Disraeli. Inherited instinct and his father's example alike pointed in this direction. But though the thirst for knowledge was present in the son as **in** the father, and the habit of

dreaming was there also, and remained there till the end, there was that **in** the son besides which made it impossible that his father's fate should overtake him. ' Destiny bears us to our lot and destiny is our own will.'¹

Neither *Vivian Grey* nor *Contarini Fleming* can be used, without discrimination as an authority for biographical details. In both, and especially in *Contarini*, which was written five years later than the other, the events of the

¹ *Contarini Fleming*, Pt. III. ch. 11.